

1571
S E R M O N

The First;

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD,

SOLICITING THEIR EARNEST ATTENTION TO THE THINGS
WHICH MAKE FOR THEIR EVERLASTING PEACE.

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Let them bear, and say it is Truth.

Isa. xliii. 9.

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TO THE
RULERS OF THE SYNAGOGUE,
THE
RABBIS AND JEWISH PEOPLE,
IN ENGLAND AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

ANIMATED, we trust, by a spirit of philanthropy, and real faith in the Scriptures of Truth, we have not beheld the state of our Jewish Brethren with careless indifference or infidel contempt. We have judged it our duty to endeavour to excite renewed and solemn investigation of those Sacred Oracles which we profess alike to receive, whether Jews or Christians. We feel it of the last importance to our own souls to know the true Jehovah, and the Messiah, who is the sum and substance of all the Prophecies and Promises, and in whom *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.*

The days of candor and divine charity have, we trust, begun to dawn: bigotry and prejudices are fast subsiding. We no longer dare despise, or insult, any man for his religious opinions. Assured that there can be but *one revealed truth*, we endeavour to awaken every man's conscience to the necessity of a deep and practical enquiry into their real state before God, and what support they have against the hour of death and day of judgment. We should, indeed, be under a fearful delusion, if we vainly rested on educational religion, received by tradition from our fathers; or be absurdly attached to forms, which enter not into the essence of godliness. It behoves every Jew and every Christian to acquaint themselves with the solid foundation on which true hope is built, so as to be able to give a reason of that hope to him that asketh, "with gentleness and respect," *πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου*, 1 Pet. iii. 15. Passion is never the proof of true piety; nor will the wrath of man, in any of its exertions, produce the righteousness of God. Bearing with each other's infirmities — respecting each other's excellencies—divested of the repulsive passions of pride and contempt—and ready to hear,

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

hear, as to speak, in love, and in the spirit of meekness ;—such communications cannot but have a tendency to enlarge the circle of our information, to induce greater attention to the important objects before us, and to lead men of one blood, however they may finally differ, to greater patience and forbearance in the matters yet in controversy, and to nearer union in those things, about which there can be no controversy, *to do good unto all men.* Whilst our exertions are confined to, or centre in, the little circle of our particular connections, and exclude all who differ from us, the expansive force of divine liberality must be necessarily restricted, and we shall so far be unlike him who causeth his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth his rain upon the just and upon the unjust.

False religion has long been paving the way for the triumphs of Infidelity, which now reigns almost uncontrouled : nor can it be otherwise. Bigot Jews and formal Christians afford an easy conquest to the reasoners of this world. They have a thousand breaches, at which their arguments, or ridicule,

cule, can enter, to throw down the foolish confidences of mere traditional opinions. Herein, indeed, their victory consists. They can demolish and raze the foundations of superstition and bigotry; but when they attempt to raise a new superstructure, of Morals, or Materialism, the Religion of Philosophy is found more impotent of all good, and more destructive of all conscientious principle, than all that it hath overturned. Infidelity and Atheism will find in this novel experiment, that without a Governor of the universe and a Judge of quick and dead, the maintenance of order and the peace of society will hardly be supported.

It is an awful truth, that the number of those, who call themselves still Jews or Christians, but live as Infidels, and radically embrace their sentiments, is astonishingly great. Divine Revelation to such, has no conclusive authority. They only yield to it a partial acknowledgement of just as much as they like, and reject the rest, which in fact is the rejection of the whole, for a revelation from God admits of no partial reception.

Strongly

Strongly persuaded ourselves of the Divine authority of the Scriptures, we call upon the disciples of Moses to search them with us, to examine into their faithful conformity with his injunctions, without adding to, or diminishing from, the things written in the book.

As Christianity stands in the nearest relation to Judaism—admits the whole of the Oracles committed to the fathers—supposes, and exhibits, the fulfilment of the prophecies—and inculcates obedience to God's revealed will, as the consequence of a divine principle communicated, even of faith which worketh by love—it highly imports every Jew to examine the records, to weigh the evidence, and to try the ground of his own hope by the principles he himself admits. At least, the deep and serious enquiry can do no harm, and the eternal importance of the matter requires it. Every examination into a man's state before God, according to his own principles, will be attended, if sincere, with humiliation, and calls to greater diligence, and so far produce, it is presumed, some good to himself, in his firmer establishment in faith, and humble and holy walking with God.

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We beg therefore, Brethren, of you a candid perusal. We desire to hear your objections with the same candor with which we propose our own arguments. And if no other good result from the intercourse between us, we hope it will tend to soften down all bitterness and disrespect, with which false Christians, and false Jews have been too prone to treat their opponents; a temper and conduct that must be utterly inconsistent with every principle of *true* religion,

Mistake not our object; nor suppose we wish you to profess *our* religion, and to abandon *your own*. We should think our labour employed to little purpose, could we persuade every Jew we meet to receive Baptism, and become such Christians as are, perhaps, his next door neighbours, the worldlings on the 'Change, or the formal and unawakened in our churches. We perceive but one religion in the Bible, *divine subjection of heart* to the King Messiah: and where the conscience feels no sense of sin and misery, nor seeks in his appointed ways to find acceptance with a pardoning God, we esteem Jew, Turk, Heathen, and nominal Christian, to be exactly
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on a level respecting salvation, and no change of outward profession worth a moment's labour, as long as the heart remains not *right with God*.

Accept then, Brethren, this token of our good will towards you, and cultivate towards us a like mind. And may our God and yours direct us into all truth, and prepare us for his everlasting kingdom!

on a level respecting dignity, and no change
of outward position worth a moment's dis-
turbance, as long as the heart remains not
troubled.

Accept then, brethren, the token of our
good will towards you, and sincere love
and a like mind. And may the Lord and your
chief as well as truth, and respect to the
truth be preserved.

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The first.

HEBREWS iv. 2.

For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

WITH chearfulness I submit to the task allotted me by my Brethren : and, were my abilities equal to the good will I bear the honoured offspring of Abraham, I might hope this labour of love would not be in vain in the Lord. But, whether he be now pleased to grant, or deny, our prayer, to crown this attempt for his Israel's good, or disappoint our desires, the time *will come* assuredly when, if we fail, others, stimulated to more vigorous exertions, shall be blessed with more abundant success.

Breathing this spirit of philanthropy towards our Brethren universally through the whole world, and especially to those who are dear to us for *their fathers' sakes*, we cannot look with indifference on the state of deplorable ignorance and disobedience into which the Jewish people are in general sunk down, without anxious concern for the consequences which must ensue. Grieved at the insults which have been so unworthily inflicted on the race of Israel, by many who have borne the Christian name, we, Brethren, are stretching forth to you the arms of affection; and whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, we feel ourselves constrained to press upon your consciences a candid and serious consideration of subjects equally interesting, and eternally momentous alike to Jew and Gentile. The Oracles of God—their awful contents—the true Jehovah—what duty, love, and service we owe him—and how we are discharging our obligations;—these cannot but be owned to be matters of the last importance to every man who has the least pretensions to reason or religion.

In every attempt to heal divisions, prudence dictates, that we should begin with the review of those common principles in which we are agreed, and of those truths admitted equally by Jews and Christians. The sharp angles of controversy will thus be rubbed down to the smoother

smoother surfaces of mutual good will. We wish to conciliate your regard; and we resolve to deserve your esteem at least, if we are unable to communicate to you all the rich blessings which we desire.

Happily *the leading features of the Jewish and Christian religion are the same.* We boast the same divine origin—profess to believe in the same God—to hold the same rule of duty—and look to the one Messiah. These most important points of union and agreement we are at present to consider.

FIRST. *We mutually acknowledge revelation,* as necessary to inform the erring judgement, and correct the devious steps of the fallen sons of Adam, that they may be brought back to the knowledge, love, and worship of the only true God.

Indeed, it is among the flattering distinctions of the Jew, that to them first were committed the Oracles of God, and that to their fathers, “at sundry times, and in diverse manners, he spake by his holy prophets, since the world began.”

As the happy consequences of such communications, this people, however oppressed or despised, possessed a treasure of wisdom and knowledge which all the learning of Egypt, and the
genius

genius of Greece, were unable to attain, and incompetent to supply.

To them alone, *SECONDLY*, the *one true God* was revealed in the unity of Jehovah, and the perfections of his nature and attributes, as a spirit, self-existent, omnipotent, eternal, incomprehensible.

Whilst all the rest of the world was sunk in the grossest idolatry, "changing the glory of God into images, made like to corruptible man, and birds, and quadrupeds, and reptiles;" "in Jewry was God known, his name was great in Israel." Contemptibly as the Jewish nation has been treated by modern infidels, in the first criterion of wisdom, the knowledge of God, the meanest Hebrew as far exceeded all the sages of the East, as revelation doth unenlightened reason, or certitude conjecture. Even these proud sophists themselves, however affecting to despise the vulgar herd, bowed down to the established Polytheism; and, "brutish in their knowledge, turned the truth of God into a lie," affording the most complete demonstration, that "the world by wisdom knew not God," and that, after all their researches, *they* could never find out the Almighty to perfection.

Jehovah, indeed, like the sun, the noblest object of his creation, can only be known by
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beams himself dispenses. Till he shine into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of his glory, man may feel after him, but cannot find him. Enveloped with the clouds of thick darkness, he to them remains for ever "the unknown God." The speculations of the deepest metaphysicians on his being and attributes will be as far from the true Jehovah as all the rabble of Heathen Deities, or the hideous and grotesque idols of Indostan, the work of men's hands.

THIRDLY. Agreeing in the acknowledgement of the one God, as united are we, professionally at least, *in submission to the law and its sanctions.*

My Jewish Brethren, the two tables of the Covenant, written and engraven on stones, we admit, as you do, to be of eternal obligation; not merely as given by Moses on Sinai, but as containing a rule of duty resulting from the very nature of God, and from the relation in which we stand towards him, as creatures to their Creator.

Against such a God, and such a law, "every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompence of reward." The *sanctions* must be awful, and the *penalty*, like him who inflicts it, *eternal*. God cannot change. Sin cannot alter its nature or desert. "Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things
" written

“written in the book of the law to do them.” At least this was the faith of the antient Jewish as well as Christian church; and I am shocked to observe, in many modern Jews, as well as professing Christians, with whom I have lately conversed, a grievous defection from Moses and the Law in this behalf, and an utter rejection of *eternal punishment* as the wages of sin—an Infidelity begotten by, and springing out of, that state into which they are together fallen, and which makes it their mutual interest to deny what, if admitted to be true, must be their present torment. Oh! Jewish people, the sanctions of your law, and ours, are indeed awful and eternal. “Wo to the wicked; for it shall be ill with him.” “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” “Who can dwell with the devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?”

As cordially as any Israelite we admit also, *the ceremonial*, as well as *the moral law*; deeply impressed with a sense of its necessity, as providing for man, a sinner, that atonement, without which every transgression must have left the awakened conscience in despair. Indeed, how any Jew, consistent with his own principles, can possibly hope for peace with God, deprived, as he is, of Altar, Sacrifice, Priest, and Atonement, is astonishing: and among the striking proofs

proofs of the blindness, ignorance, and hardness of the unhumbled heart: "for, without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin:" and Christian and Jew, if they would judge consistently with their own sacred records, must acknowledge the necessity of a vicarious sacrifice, and the need of a propitiation before a holy and offended God.

It was, **FOURTHLY**, for this great purpose of atonement and reconciliation, that, from the first promise of "the Bruiser of the serpent's head," to the last, of his "speedily coming into his temple," we are directed *to expect the Messiah*; who is equally "the desire of all nations," because alike needed by all, whether Jew or Gentile, "to finish transgression, and make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Such was the faith of the ancient Jewish church; and nothing contrary to, or inconsistent with, the glories of his kingdom, when truly understood, is to be inferred from his sufferings, humiliation, and sacrifice. But I may not anticipate what will be hereafter advanced by my Brethren on this head: suffice it to say, that Messiah, with *us both*, is alike the great object of faith and hope. We look "for salvation in no other," nor suppose "there is any other name given under heaven, among men, whereby they can be saved." However

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we may differ respecting the time of his appearing, and the nature of that kingdom which he shall set up on earth, "in him, and in him" alone, we believe that all the nations of the "earth shall be blessed."

FIFTHLY. That *prayer should be made to him, and daily he should be praised*, every Jew and Christian must admit to be alike their bounden duty and service. However criminal the one or the other may be, in the neglect of these obligations, none will dare deny that to God we owe them. Nor must these be the service of the lip, or the knee; "God requireth truth in the inward parts;" and "they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Without this, the loudest devotions, or the most expensive sacrifices, would be "vain oblations," and no more accepted on God's altar than swine's blood or the flesh of a dog, the most abhorred of abominable things. And here I cannot but observe, that the mere gabble of prayer and praise, whether in a synagogue or a cathedral, is equally distant from the worship of the heart which Jehovah requires. "We must pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also," or else our services will be as vain as the lengthened clamours and cuttings of the priests of Baal, when they leaped on their altars, crying, "O Baal! hear us," from morning until noon.

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We must bring with us a devotional spirit, and approach with reverential steps the place where HIS honour dwelleth. And when we bow our knees before the Most High and Most Holy, a guard must be placed on the door of our lips; nor should we dare be hasty to utter any thing before God, lest we offer the sacrifice of fools, and our very prayers be turned into sin. A subject this, that ought solemnly to affect Jew and Christian alike in every act of divine worship; for, "God is not mocked." The mockery and delusion will rest upon our own souls, whenever with lying lips, and with a deceitful tongue, we dare thus insult Him "who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins," and from whom nothing is secret.

LASTLY. We are, in profession at least, agreed, that *Jehovah must be honoured, not only with our lips, but in our LIVES, by giving ourselves up to his service, and by walking before him in righteousness and true holiness all the days of our lives.* Without Morals there can be no Religion. Those which the Bible inculcate are confessedly the purest, and of the most perfect kind. "Be ye holy," says Jehovah, "for I am holy." Both the *principle* and the *practice* are, in the fullest manner, set down in our book: and they are without excuse who shut their eyes, and "hate the light, neither come

“unto the light, lest their deeds should be made manifest, that they are wrought in darknesses.”

“My Son, give me thy heart,” is the plainest of the divine injunctions. Jews and Christians alike acknowledge it; and they are alike bound “to glorify God in their bodies, and in their spirits, which are his.” To submit without murmuring to his providences—to make his revealed word the rule of our conduct—to desire that his will may be done upon earth, as it is in heaven—and to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by all holy conversation and godliness—these are alike obligations on us both. And every man who assumes the name of Jew or Christian is (κατακριτός) condemned out of his own mouth, and by his own heart, when his life gives the lie to his professions; and therefore the holy and heart-searching God must much more condemn him.

Yet it is awfully evident that the whole Jewish and Christian world abounds with such characters, and therefore *lieth in wickedness*. The professed disciples of Moses and of Jesus are involved in the same condemnation, and act in the same contradiction to their admitted principles. We see them alike serving diverse lusts and pleasures—sunk in worldly amusements or engagements—earthly in their tempers—
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fual in their enjoyments—preferring gain to godlinefs—and centaurs not fabulous, treading both the Tables of the Covenant under their feet.

To expatiate on fcenes fo oppofite to all religion would lead me into a vaft field of awful reflections on *false* Jews and *false* Chriftians, whose prefumptuous careleffnefs about their fouls and infidel indifference about an eternal world, cannot but be the prelude to certain deftruction,—unless they repent.

Now thefe things, Brethren, are the great barriers againft conviction. It is this prevailing immorality, irreligion, indevotion, and worldly-mindednefs, that indispose men for the reception of the Divine Word, and feal them up in Infidelity and Atheifm; for, fo low are many Chriftians alfo fallen, that they doubt of their own immortality; and, with Sadducean fcepticifm, difpute whether there be angel or fpirit, hell or heaven.

Brethren, “if any man will do his will, he
“shall know of the doctrine whether it be of
“God.” The heart, which is ferioufly engaged to follow the mind of God as far as it is known, and cries, “Lord! what I know not teach thou
“me,” will be led in fimplicity and godly fincerity to enquire, “what is truth;” to inveftigate

gate what is dark, and to ascertain what is dubious. Thus searched the noble Bereans the Scriptures daily, that they might see if these things were so, and the consequence was happy, "Then many of that city believed." Could we persuade you, Brethren, to make a like candid and serious enquiry, we might hope for a like blessed issue; but where wilful ignorance and presumptuous sin blind the eyes, and harden the heart, I appeal to the Circumcision and to the Uncircumcision, according to the admitted principles of Judaism or Christianity, what must be the end of these things, if there be indeed a God that judgeth the earth.

Let the Jew then renounce Moses and the Law; let the Christian reject Jesus and his Gospel;—this will be more consistent far than to admit of a revelation, which they neither believe nor obey—to acknowledge Jehovah, whom they neither reverence, love, worship, nor serve—to confess a responsibility to his government, whilst they live in the habitual transgression of his law, and treat its sanctions with contempt—and to profess faith in a Messiah, whose kingdom and coming they must dread;—let such men, I say, tremble to take the name of God and his Messiah in their lips; for, whoever he is, and whensoever he shall be revealed, assuredly every such Jew,

Jew, and every such Christian, must be disowned of him, rejected by him, and driven from his presence with everlasting shame and contempt. They will hear that terrible voice from the throne of the tremendous Judge of quick and dead, "Depart from me, accursed: I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity."

My Brethren, whether Jews or Christians, know, that a deep and humbling sense of the state into which we are fallen is essential to our recovery, and to the reception of all saving truth. They who are whole need not the physician, but those who are sick. Till a Divine conviction of sin fixes on the conscience through the power of the Holy Ghost, no such concern will ever be awakened in the heart about salvation as can lead to him, "who alone is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

"O kiss the Son then, lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way. If his wrath be kindled, yea, but for a moment, who can abide it?" He must be without excuse, or the possibility of escape, who neglects so great salvation; and wrath will come upon him to the uttermost.

"Take heed then, Brethren, lest there be in any of you this evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God:" and ye also
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perish with those who believed not. "For the Gospel was preached to them even as to us, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those that heard it"—of all that immense host, the hundreds of thousands of Jews, who came out of Egypt by Moses, only two were counted faithful, were suffered to pass the river Jordan, and to inherit the Land of Promise. The carcases of all the rest fell in the Wilderness, "because they gave no credence to his word."

Hearken then, Brethren, every one of you—examine your consciences and conduct—consider your ways—search the Scriptures,—and know assuredly, that no man truly believes in Jehovah who does not honour him as God; and that he can have no part nor lot in Messiah, who is not a faithful subject of his kingdom. We must conclude, therefore, with the most infallible certainty, that he is *no more a Christian than a Jew*, nor *a Jew than a Christian*, whose life is habitually a contradiction to the first principles of that religion which he himself professes.

But whether professionally Jew or Christian, a moment only is allotted for thy abidance here below; and on that moment eternity depends. Dark and dismal is the prospect beyond the grave, where faith doth not realize the hope full
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of immortality, and revelation unbar the gates of life and glory. Death, death approaches. He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. How awful the alternative !

END OF SERMON I.

THE WORDS TO THE LIVES

of immortality, and revelation under the gates
of life and glory, death, death, death, death,
He that believeth shall be saved, and he that
believeth not shall be damned. How shall the

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